

AMENDMENT TO THE CLAIMS

1. (currently amended) A suspension comprising:

a longitudinal axis;

a first side edge and a second side edge, the first and second side edges located on opposite sides of the longitudinal axis;

a proximal mounting section;

a rigid load beam section, wherein the first and second side edges in the rigid load beam section are positioned at a first angle with respect to the longitudinal axis;

a flexible section located between the proximal mounting section and the rigid load beam section, the flexible section and having a preload bend, wherein the first and second side edges are at least partially positioned in the flexible section at a second angle with respect to the longitudinal axis, wherein the first and second angles are different;

a peak strain region located between the preload bend and the rigid load beam section, wherein the peak strain region is located at least partially along the longitudinal axis; and

a damper covering at least a portion of the peak strain region.

2. (original) The suspension of claim 1, wherein the peak strain region further includes a strain focusing aperture.

3. (original) The suspension of claim 2, wherein the strain focusing aperture comprises an elongated slot, which extends transversely to the longitudinal axis and has first and second ends that are respectively spaced from first and second opposing side edges of the suspension.

4. (original) The suspension of claim 3, wherein the strain focusing aperture concentrates strain energy in the peak strain region between the first end of the strain focusing aperture and the first side edge and between the second end of the strain focusing aperture and the second side edge.

5. (original) The suspension of claim 4, wherein the damper covers a portion of the surface area of the suspension that is located between the first end of the strain focusing aperture and the first side edge and between the second end of the strain focusing aperture and the second side edge.
6. (original) The suspension of claim 2, wherein the damper covers the strain focusing aperture.
7. (original) The suspension of claim 1, wherein the flexible section further includes a pair of spaced, elongated flexible struts extending from the proximal mounting section toward the peak strain region, and wherein the preload bend is formed across the flexible struts.
8. (original) The suspension of claim 7, wherein the flexible section further includes a strain focusing aperture located between a distal end of the first and second flexible struts and the rigid load beam section.
9. (original) The suspension of claim 8, wherein the strain focusing aperture comprises an elongated slot extending transversely to the longitudinal axis and having first and second ends, which are spaced from the first and second side edges, respectively.
10. (original) The suspension of claim 9, wherein the damper covers a portion of the surface area of the suspension that is located between the first end of the strain focusing aperture and the first side edge and between the second end of the strain focusing aperture and the second side edge.
11. (withdrawn) A method of damping a suspension having a flexible section, a rigid load beam section and a preload bend in the flexible section, the method comprising:
 - concentrating high strain energy into a peak strain region located between the preload bend and the rigid load beam section; and
 - damping at least a portion of the peak strain region with a damper.

12. (withdrawn) The method of claim 11, wherein concentrating high strain energy further comprises forming a strain focusing aperture within the peak strain region.

13. (withdrawn) The method of claim 12, wherein forming a strain focusing aperture comprises forming an elongated slot in the peak strain region, which extends transversely to a longitudinal axis of the suspension, for concentrating strain energy between a first end of the slot and a respective first side edge of the suspension and between a second end of the slot and a respective second side edge of the suspension.

14. (withdrawn) The method of claim 13, wherein damping at least a portion of the peak strain region comprises damping the strain energy between the first end of the slot and the first side edge of the suspension and between the second end of the slot and the second side edge of the suspension.

15-22. (canceled).

23. (currently amended) A suspension comprising:

- a longitudinal axis;

- a proximal mounting section;

- a rigid load beam section;

- a flexible section located between the proximal mounting section and the rigid load beam section, the flexible section having a preload bend;

- a peak strain region located between the preload bend and the rigid load beam section, wherein the peak strain region is located at least partially along the longitudinal axis;

- a strain focusing aperture located within the peak strain region; and

- a damper covering at least a portion of the peak strain region.

24. (new) The suspension of claim 23, wherein the strain focusing aperture comprises an elongated slot, which extends transversely to the longitudinal axis and has first and second ends that are spaced from first and second side edges of the suspension, respectively.

25. (new) The suspension of claim 24, wherein the strain focusing aperture concentrates the peak strain energy between the first end of the strain focusing aperture and the first side edge and between the second end of the strain focusing aperture and the second side edge.

26. (new) The suspension of claim 25, wherein the damper covers a portion of the surface area of the suspension that is located between the first end of the strain focusing aperture and the first side edge and between the second end of the strain focusing aperture and the second side edge.

27. (new) The suspension of claim 23, wherein the damper covers the strain focusing aperture.

28. (new) The suspension of claim 23, wherein the flexible section further includes a pair of spaced, elongated flexible struts extending from the proximal mounting section toward the peak strain region, and wherein the preload bend is formed across the flexible struts.

29. (new) The suspension of claim 28, wherein the strain focusing aperture is located between the distal end of the first and second flexible struts and the rigid load beam section.

30. (new) The suspension of claim 29, wherein the strain focusing aperture comprises an elongated slot extending transversely to the longitudinal axis and having first and second ends, which are spaced from first and second side edges of the suspension, respectively.

31. (new) The suspension of claim 30, wherein the damper covers a portion of the surface area of the suspension that is located between the first end of the strain focusing aperture and the first side edge and between the second end of the strain focusing aperture and the second side edge.